April, 1978

Program Priorities for Children's Services in 1978

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INTRODUCTION

This paper represents an activity which is difficult and often painful--that of exercising choice. It is difficult because in the real world there is never sufficient information, and competition among questions of value is shifting sand. It is painful because there are many "no's" for every "yes", because there is merit in most proposals, and most significantly because we may be wrong and the consequences are not trivial in our field. We have attempted to organize and present a discussion of our criteria for choosing at this moment, as we survey a broad range of services for children only unified in one division ten months ago.

There are several reasons for doing this. We have been literally deluged with proposals for new programs and program enrichments, many sent in the confidence that the "new division" would be more sympathetic or have more funds. Many of these proposals are based on claims by region or client groups that they are less well served than others. Some come from groups who were given or feel they were given approval in principle and are thereby on some sort of informal "waiting list" for funding. We have encountered not a few programs which were caught in mid-development by the imposition of financial constraints and are not really viable at their present size or complement. The need for an explicit rationale for choosing was apparent.

These purposes, however, could have been met by an "internal" priority system with less effort and much less risk. We are moved by the belief that public discussion is a prerequisite for coherent change. For example, although there appears to be an emerging consensus that we should begin to effect a general shift in emphasis in our services away from reliance on institutions and highly specialized programs, only an informed and active discussion can ensure clarity and refinement of objectives and avoid cant. Such a change requires considerable effort and thought--how can the child and the family be genuinely assisted? How can the community provide better for those of us who are unattractive, more vulnerable or less sufficient? How much of our talk of community, of family, is sentiment and nostalgia and how much serious and practical? Closing down institutions is easier than creating a climate of tolerance and support.

At a time when much is being said about the need for reducing reliance upon residential service and alternative care, a word about balance is necessary. There are some children who need a "new" family or residential care because their own families are simply unable to provide for their physical and emotional well-being, even with the support of special programs. On the other hand, many children become candidates for residential programs because there is insufficient support available to their own families. A balance of services which support and substitute for the family must be developed to make it possible to respond to individual needs and thus serve the interests of the child.

As we review our activities and contemplate the need for better prevention, sufficient basic care, and more effective treatment, we must insist that these meet exacting standards--the label and the sentiment are not enough. The balance of allocations among these service categories and their contents must submit to analysis on many dimensions--regional adequacy, completeness of overall range, manifestation of the Division's basic principles, basic quality and cost.

Our commitment to reorganizing services around the needs of children and their families is intended to bring more rationality to a system that has evolved in response to a multiplicity of special interests. It is also intended to ensure that services are flexible enough to respond sensitively to the needs of individual children. However, there is a major dilemma in this approach to priority setting. By promoting the identification of needs as the first step in the process, we may be raising expectations about the availability of services which we cannot meet in a time of severe economic and budgetary constraints. Further, this focus requires new approaches from policy-makers, program managers and front-line workers. It is of strategic importance, therefore, that the Division assist communities to identify and priorize the needs of children, and evaluate the effectiveness of current services in this context.

Several other factors limit the range of choice in this first approach to priority setting. In the first place, our information about the service system as a whole is not yet complete. Secondly, expenditures for the upcoming fiscal year largely have been committed for some time. Thirdly, the climate of economic constraint means that new programs must in most cases involve reallocation, not new funding.

Other difficulties arise from the incomplete nature of the Division's own internal reorganization. At the time of writing we are still organized internally by branches--Corrections, Child Welfare, Day Care, Mental Health Services and so on. This has made it difficult to make value or priority comparisons within geographic regions. Although we have carried out a planning exercise in the North as a whole this year, a regional perspective will not be applied generally throughout the province until we begin to approach spending for 1979-80 this summer.

Since program transfers to the Division are, as yet, not fully effected, such as services for mentally retarded children, we are not able to encompass a full spectrum of service for children with special needs.

Many are urging that increased spending be applied to assessment resources, particularly to assist decision-making by courts and others responsible for children. While thoughtful decision-making necessarily requires support, we fear making any major new investment in this area before we have thought through very carefully what is meant by assessment, what skills and resources are required, and at what points in the overall service system it should be located. "Assessment", like "treatment", "prevention", and "evaluation", is a term much used and much abused. Therefore, while acknowledging the pressing need for well-informed decision-making and skillful identification of needs we will avoid commitment of major funding at this time to services whose basic element is assessment.

In short, our planning process is not what it must become and, yet, a beginning must be made. We are clear that careful investment in coordination is needed. We have, therefore, made a commitment to develop local children's services committees throughout the province to take on the authority and responsibility for planning and providing services to children with special needs. Our consultation paper, entitled Local Children's Services Committees: Planning for the Future (January, 1978), describes our approach. These committees will ultimately engage in their own priority-setting process at the local level. Since they will take several years to fully develop, the statement of priorities in this paper is necessary, in the interim, to guide the development of programs. It is not too soon to begin allocating more resources to selected preventive and early intervention projects. Enhanced emphasis upon family support must begin now to complement a trend away from institutional and alternative care. Likewise, if we are to be successful in reducing the numbers of children in training schools, programs which provide short-term custody and control in the context of good crisis programming--supporting but not replacing family and community--must be developed. Thus, our increased spending on detention/supervision. Such expenditures, at first glance, may seem to contradict our stated commitments to community-based services and our non-institutional emphasis. We must not, however, allow ideologies to distort our grasp of reality.

Quantity and quality of resources are not the only factors to be considered in addressing ourselves to the needs of families and children today. Coordination and planning, although also necessary, do not complete the picture. We must honestly face the fact that some of the most agonizing problems, often with tragic outcomes, arise from our collective uncertainty with respect to the appropriate exercise of authority when dealing with those youngsters, and some not so young, who do not wish our help. We are caught in the grip of the conflict between our value of personal freedom and our concept of responsibility for the immature and the vulnerable.

Traditional means of dealing with such issues--absolute parental authority, psychiatric authority with respect to the mentally ill and so on--no longer find the general support they require for effectiveness, yet new answers elude us. We would be dangerously misled if we assumed that all our difficulties could be solved through improved service delivery. We intend to raise such issues for public consultation and discussion and, indeed, a beginning has been made in that respect in our Consultation Paper on Short-term Legislative Amendments, issued in December, 1977.

In summary, this paper takes us about as far as we feel we can go towards establishing program priorities for the upcoming fiscal year. In disclosing its approach the Division invites discussion and comment which will be considered carefully as planning for 1979 allocations begins. A Feedback Page is included at the end of the paper for this purpose.

The creation of the Children's Services Division on July 1, 1977, brought together a variety of programs from four ministries, each with their own program perspectives and definitions. Before we can make any statements about program priorities, we must develop an understanding of how these programs fit into an overall pattern of services to children and their families. This pattern may then offer us insights into the directions we will take in assigning priorities for program development in 1978.

The Spectrum of Service

A "spectrum of service" format has been developed to provide a preliminary framework within which we can map our programs and begin to analyze their impact (see Figure 1 on the following page). The horizontal axis of the spectrum describes six objectives for services. They range along a continuum from services "promoting quality of life for optimal development" (#1 in Figure 1) to services "imposing societal restraint through legal detention" (#6 in Figure 1) The services arrayed along the spectrum can be described further as focussing, at one end, on a universal population involving minimal intervention in people's lives. At the other end, the focus is on a very select group of people involving maximum intervention in restricting their freedom. All programs supported by the Children's Services Division can be mapped along this spectrum according to their objective(s). In many cases, a program may address two or more related objectives.

Across the top of Figure 1, three goals are identified: nourishment, rehabilitation and control. The goals of nourishment and control are self-explanatory. Rehabilitation, however, requires definition because it has a variety of connotations. (It has been used often to describe programs which teach people to adapt to disabilities when treatment methods cannot restore the person to good health.) In order to clarify its meaning in this context, we will use the definition offered by Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (1977): "to restore to a condition of health or useful and constructive activity".

The six objectives in Figure 1 are intended to address these overall goals of service. The dotted lines between the goals and objectives indicate that some objectives relate to more than one goal.

Program priorities will be described in relation to their objectives. A variety of specific programs can address the same objective, allowing for local flexibility in the development of programs.

FIGURE 1 - SPECTRUM OF SERVICE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
(1977-78)

GOALS: NOURISHMENT — REHABILITATION — CONTROL

SERVICE OBJECTIVES

1. Promoting quality of life for optimal development
2. Maximizing strengths to cope with potential problems
3. Providing support to cope with crisis situations
4. Providing treatment to promote personal or behavioural change and capacity to cope
5. Imposing temporary restraint to support capacity for self-control
6. Imposing societal restraint through legal detention

PROGRAM STRATEGIES

A support

D.N.-Regular (13.6%) $29,600,000
C.W.-Family Services (10.7%) $23,482,661
C.W.-Community Services (1%) $2,164,230

D.N.-Special (2%) $5,000,000

Corr.-Diversion (.18%) $400,000

C.M.H.S.-Total-$60,108,800 (27%)
-Outpatient - 1613 places
-Home care - 206 places
-Day treatment 1161 places

Corr.-Probation and Aftercare (4%) $8,743,000

COURT

B substitution

C.W.-Adoption (1%) $2,997,633

Corr.-Group Homes (1.6%) $3,591,600
O/D - Open Homes (.11%) $240,000
-Residential 1304 places

O/D-Lockable Homes (.22%) $479,400

Corr.-Training School & D.A.R.E. (9%) $20,487,600

O/D-Locked Homes (.82%) $1,786,600

COURT

C.W.-Foster - Regular and Special (14.7%) $32,176,459
C.W.-Institutional (10.7%) $23,571,599
C.W.-Group (5.7%) $12,527,986

CODE: Corr. - Corrections; C.W. - Child Welfare (including C.A.S., Children's & Youth Institutions & Children's Boarding Homes);
O/D - Observation & Detention Homes; D.N. - Day Nurseries; C.M.H.S. - Children's Mental Health Services.

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The vertical axis at the left in Figure 1 represents the two major methods of providing programs: those which support the family unit (a) and those which provide a substitute for the family unit (b). This axis is derived from the policy of the Children's Services Division to provide increased support to families and to reduce the amount of alternative, substitute care, wherever possible. It is being used in this format to demonstrate how children's services currently reflect the tendency toward the provision of programs which substitute for the family unit.

Programs will be placed within the spectrum of service using these two dimensions: the objectives of the program and the basic method utilized.

Prevention programs focussing on promotion of healthy lifestyles (A-1) and support to people in potentially high-risk situations (A-2) are shown at the left of Figure 1. About twenty-five percent of our resources are being used for programs in the latter category. However, there are major roles for related systems (such as education, health, recreation, income maintenance and housing) to play in promoting healthy environments and lifestyles that may reduce the incidence of problems requiring specialized services. The Children's Services Division can advocate coordinated programs with related systems to strengthen prevention efforts.

There is a broad consensus that insufficient resources and efforts are being devoted to prevention programs, at the left of the spectrum. By coordinating these efforts and by utilizing the collective resources of children's services, health, education, recreation, income maintenance and housing the task of prevention may be managed more effectively.

While Figure 1 indicates that money is being spent on all given categories of programs, informed opinion strongly suggests many inadequacies and gaps in our range of services. A major task of people involved in children's services will be to develop an understanding of what constitutes an adequate spectrum of service, so that we can reallocate our resources more equitably.

Plotting Programs Within the Spectrum

Financial and program information for 1977-78 was collected from each of the five branches of the Children's Services Division:

- Child Welfare, including children's aid societies, children's boarding homes, and children's and youth institutions

- Corrections, including training schools, group homes, probation and aftercare, and diversion programs

- Observation/Detention Homes, including locked, lockable and open facilities

- Day Nurseries, including regular and special programs

- Children's Mental Health Services, including residential and non-residential programs.

The information was then plotted on the spectrum of service according to program objectives.

The five branches of the Division are identified by abbreviations (see the code at the bottom of Figure 1). The program descriptions following the codes correspond to those used by the branches. For example, in the box marked B-3, you will find groups homes under the Corrections Branch and Observation/Detention Homes which are described as "open homes".

In some cases, programs meet more than one objective in the spectrum. For example, the institutional and group programs provided by the Child Welfare Branch stretch from boxes B-2 to B-4, as indicated by the arrows.

The percentage figures indicated in parentheses next to each of the program descriptions indicate the portion of the budget for that program in relation to the total budgeted for the delivery of children's services in the Ministry of Community and Social Services. The grand total for all of the branch programs in the Children's Services Division amounts to $218 million. However, there is one exception. The Children's Mental Health Services Branch has organized its information by centre rather than by program (e.g., out-patient). For the purposes of this paper, there was insufficient time to translate their budget into program terms. Therefore, children's mental health centres are plotted by the number of places rather than by dollar amounts. Only the total dollar figure for services is indicated, along with the percentage compared to the total budgeted for children's services delivery.

Spectrum Analysis

The full implications of this array of services still must be clarified and generalizations regarding the aggregate information must be subject to careful, cautious analysis. Some broad, clearly discernable patterns are suggested in the following paragraphs.

About one-third of the budget for programs in the Children's Services Division goes into support services for children and families, while roughly two-thirds is used to provide substitute services. Since the Division has established a policy of increased emphasis on support, a reduction of our overall capacity for substitute care must be planned. (See page 13 for the Basic Principles of Service Delivery.) At the same time, we recognize that our preference for support must be exercised only where circumstances warrant such a choice in the best interests of the child. A variety of substitute care will always be necessary to meet the needs of some children.

Corrections

In 1977-78, we reduced our investment in training schools, which serve a small population of children, to roughly nine percent of the total expenditure for children's services compared to twelve percent in 1976-77. This is the result of efforts in the Corrections Branch to reallocate its budget and expand community-based services that provide more support to children in their own homes and communities. For example, probation and aftercare services have received increased support in the past two years, and group homes have been under development as alternatives to training school placements. The development of diversion programs, though representing a small percentage of the overall budget, is a further indication of the desire to prevent the institutionalization of children.

Family Support Services

Support services for children and their families who are experiencing problems can be found in boxes A-3 and A-4. These services are comprised largely of non-residential programs run by children's mental health centres (i.e., home care, out-patient, and day treatment), as well as family services provided by children's aid societies. There are indications of concern from some of these programs that the resources are insufficient to meet present demands. With the trend toward community-based programming in Corrections, we may expect an even greater demand for these types of support services in the near future.

The present trend toward an aging population will reduce the actual numbers of children potentially requiring services in the next five years. Long range demographic projections support the possibility of a new, secondary baby boom in the mid-1980's.

At this time, we lack information about identified needs which would help us to determine what constitutes an adequate level of resources to meet the demand for service. Policy development in this area would be assisted immeasurably by discussions among service providers, consumers and policy-makers leading to some consensus about the full range of services that should be accessible to all children and families in the province.

Day Care

The development of day care services has been rapid in recent years. In the fiscal year 1970-71, there were 27,150 licensed spaces available across the province and by 1975-76, there were 47,000 spaces. While the number of spaces almost doubled during that time, provincial subsidies increased ten-fold, from $3 million to over $36 million. One major reason for this substantial increase in both spaces and subsidies was the capital expansion initiatives of the Government, which funded construction and renovation at 100% of cost. The priorities established during the last capital expansion (1975-77) were first, on handicapped children; second, on low income families and native children; and third, on other children in general across the province.

Facts about licensed spaces and provincial expenditures however, do not, reflect adequately the variety and range of services offered under The Day Nurseries Act. A major function of the program is the licensing of all group care activities for more than five unrelated children, to ensure a minimum standard of care.

Licensed facilities vary widely in terms of children served, length of program, objectives, means of funding and program philosophy. Types of programs include: full-day programs for children of working mothers; half-day nursery schools with a primary focus on education; half-day programs for children who also attend kindergarten or junior kindergarten; lunch time and after school programs for school-age children; full-day and part-day developmental programs for handicapped children; and supervised private home day care. Services are operated by municipalities, private non-profit organizations, private proprietors, parent cooperatives and local associations for the handicapped. Increasingly, facilities are offering a variety of types of program and are developing opportunities for the integration of handicapped and non-handicapped children in day care programs.

Subsidized day care arrangements are primarily for normal children, living at home with their parents. The inclusion of day nurseries in this Division, along with other children's programs serving those with special needs, raises issues in the establishment of priorities for day nurseries. It may be deemed to be a preventive service, alleviating the necessity for other, more extensive treatment and rehabilitation services; if this is the case, then it should emphasize those dimensions most closely related to children at risk. On the other hand, such an approach would perhaps dilute the present philosophy, which is that it serves all children.

The need for day nurseries services for normal children is also a somewhat baffling phenomenon. There seems to be an enormous need and yet there are unfilled slots in many communities. Determining effective demand is an important aspect of the question of need. In order to do this, factors such as types and hours of service, cost and location must be considered. Once these are known and analyzed, we will be in a better position to adopt appropriate policies.

There are divergent public attitudes about day care. On the one hand, there are advocates for universal day care based on the belief that it is a major prevention strategy, designed to assist in the well-being of both children and families as a whole. On the other hand, some people believe that the existing family unit can, in most cases, provide for children on its own or through the use of private arrangements, with publicly funded programs offered in specifically defined situations (e.g., a working single parent with insufficient income).

Several major trends contribute to the increased demand for day care services: an increase in the adult female population; increased participation of women in the labour force; and an increase in the number of single parent families.

These factors suggest that our priorities for the continued development of day nurseries services must be subject to a continuing review as the needs of parents and the role of this program in the Children's Services Division become more clearly defined.

Objectives of a day nurseries program could include:

- protection of children by ensuring safe and supervised care

- subsidies to low income families so they can afford to provide such care for their children

- prevention through early identification of problems

- opportunities for nurturing and child development

- opportunities for handicapped children to have day care experiences similar to those for normal children

- intensive training and development opportunities for handicapped children

- improving education for parenting by providing nursery programs in high schools.

We must determine which of these objectives are most important for day care and how they rank in relation to other service needs of children within the Division.

We would be rash, indeed, to attempt to answer these questions in any definitive way at this time. Public discussion of day care in recent years has revolved around a number of important issues: the extent of public responsibility for day care--both its availability and financial support; the increasing costs; the means of determining eligibility for subsidies; problems and responsibilities relating to private arrangements for day care; the most appropriate program and financial arrangement for handicapped children; the relationship of day care to support services in the home; and the role of supervised private home day care.

Work toward the resolution of some of these issues is underway; others will be addressed as time and resources permit. The Ministry is committed to the concept that day care programs have an important role as a support service to children and families in their communities. We believe that this role applies legitimately to all forms of day care previously described.

The challenge we face is to develop and implement priorities for the future role of day care that will recognize the values and the objectives of existing services, and that will address the most urgent needs of children and families, while recognizing that our resources are limited. In the coming year, we will be placing a high priority on in-home programming for handicapped children.

In the short term, the provision of new day care services will focus on children with special needs and those in high-risk situations. Regular programs supported by the Day Nurseries Branch are mapped in box A-1 of our spectrum in Figure 1. Special programs for children who are unable to use the regular programs are mapped in box A-2.

Services to Mentally Retarded Children

The transfer of services for mentally retarded children from the Developmental Resources Division to the Children's Services Division is being negotiated within the Ministry of Community and Social Services in consultation with service providers. Programs currently provided for these children often are integrated across age groups, making the identification and transfer of discrete programs for children difficult. Also, the transfer of these programs will be affected by the imminent reorganization of the Ministry.

Though programs for mentally retarded children are part of the range of services available in communities, we have not yet mapped them in Figure 1. It is important to note, however, that these programs have been attempting to normalize the lives of the children they serve by developing services in their own communities as alternatives to institutional care. This policy of "normalization" will continue to be encouraged within the Children's Services Division for all of its programs.

The funding mechanisms used to support community services for mentally retarded children have hampered their development. Eighty percent of the funds are provided by the province, while twenty percent comes from local sources. Because it has been difficult to raise local money, residential programs have developed slowly. Other support programs, such as infant stimulation, have received extensive assistance. Recognizing that at least some mental retardation programs will be transferred to the Division shortly, we will make a special effort to integrate these programs within our spectrum of service in Figure 1 and include them in our program priorities once the transfer issues are resolved.

Basic Principles of Service Delivery

The Children's Services Division and the Ministry have publicly committed themselves to a series of principles which describe the philosophy upon which we will base the development of programs. These principles describe the way in which services should be provided:

For most individuals in our society, and certainly for children, the family is the elementary social group. Services to children, therefore, ought to assist rather than compete with the family by supplementation rather than provision of an alternative wherever possible. It would follow, therefore, that preventive services and other means of maintaining family integrity must have enhanced priority.

Growth and vitality of the individual as well as the family is the outcome, at least in part, of having experienced and responded to challenge with the minimum necessary external support. Help is a double edged sword which if offered with excessive zeal can debilitate as surely as biological and social disadvantage. Assistance to individuals and families, therefore, ought to minimize intrusion, disruption and restriction to the greatest degree which is consistent with potential effectiveness.

Each child and each family is unique with unique needs which change from time to time. A primary factor determining the response to these must be the needs themselves and not the structures and requirements of agencies and institutions established to provide service. Because high quality care in some fields requires specialization of function, this potentially can result in service discontinuity. This must be offset by procedures at human and organizational levels which provide for continuity of care.

All persons ought to have equal access to service in spite of regional or other differences. This implies the existence or development (or at least availability) in all areas of an adequate spectrum of service from prevention to highly specialized residential care.

Service provided should be the highest quality possible within existing levels of funding.

Help is used most effectively when it is seen as a response to the person or family's own perception of its requirements. Service, therefore, ought to be provided in a fashion which acknowledges the necessity for the consumer to be involved in the process, adequately informed and protected against imposition of unwanted help with appropriate safeguards.

All attempts to intervene in the life of a child or family must be based on the utilization of means which recognize cultural uniqueness and also minimize external perceptions of differentness because of the need for care or assistance. This means that variance in form of service must not only be tolerated but encouraged across ethnic, subcultural, regional and age differences where justifiable in terms of unique requirements.

The state of the arts and sciences concerned with human services is not yet sufficiently developed to make accountability for outcome feasible. A responsive and responsible system requires, at the minimum, however, performance accountability. All those involved in service, from direct contact with a client or patient to planning and administration should be held accountable and information systems and review procedures ought to be established to make this possible.

Recognizing that human and financial resources providing services to children and families in Ontario are large in number, it is very important to ensure the development of knowledge which will eventually make evaluation of outcome possible.

In the provision of service and the treatment of applicants for service, fairness and simple humanity must exceed expedience and narrowly conceived efficiency in priority. Persons seeking help expose their vulnerability in so doing and must be responded to with respect and even humility. Often in the provision of human service, the process, form and ceremony are at least as sustaining as the best help we have to offer.

Recognizing that no one or no group has yet cornered the market on useful ideas or knowledge and equally concerned and informed people differ often on the manner of provision of service and even on the service priorities, the development of policy and programs must be carried out with the maximal involvement of all appropriate and particularly affected groups and individuals. 1

These principles will be translated into a set of features that will be used as guidelines in looking at the design of programs for funding in 1978.

1. "Basic Principles of Service Delivery", Children's Services Newsletter, August, 1977, pp. 3-4.

THE LOCAL PERSPECTIVE ON NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

The development of province-wide program priorities will benefit from the perspective of those involved with children's services at the local level. Therefore, a special effort was made to locate and analyze reports which document the special needs of children and local program priorities arising from those needs.

Methodology and Overview

Using a telephone survey, contact was made with children's aid societies, social planning councils, municipalities, family and children's service agencies, colleges and universities, youth organizations, information centres and local coordinating bodies. The Community Liaison Groups, created by the Division in each of the 19 districts of the Ministry, were also contacted. As a result, three types of documents were identified and collected:

● studies which identified a range of needs with some priority scaling of programs necessary to meet those needs

● reports focussing on one specific need in relation to other needs with some substantiating evidence

● reports identifying one specific need with no attempt to relate it to other needs or services in the community.

Documents prepared before 1974 were not collected because substantiating information probably would be out of date.

Examination of the total set of reports, studies and briefs shows that few studies dealing with the needs of children and young people were conducted in the period 1974 to 1977. The "needs studies", which we have identified, tend to be thinly and unevenly spread across the province. Few of the conclusions contained in these documents were substantiated satisfactorily. Many were recapitulations of informed opinion only. In instances where attempts were made to substantiate needs and where priorities were identified, methodological inadequacies often would weaken or destroy the value of the analyses. However, it should be pointed out that the small number of reports identified by this survey is not an accurate indication of the commitment of local organizations to the identification of needs and priorities. The limitations of the survey's methodology in its requirement for written reports precluded local efforts which were not committed to writing.

Issues

Despite these problems, some themes did emerge for our consideration in determining program priorities for 1978. These include the desire for:

- primary preventive measures, such as education in parenting

- a focal point in communities in order to coordinate preventive programs

- services to francophone children and young people

- services in Northern Ontario, including definite and concrete priorities

- local assessment and residential services in some areas.

The survey also highlights the necessity for guidelines for agencies, interagency groups or community organizations indicating how the needs of children may be assessed and priorities established.

In the U.S., assistance with needs assessments is available to states through the Office of Child Development (newly titled the Administration for Children, Youth and Families) of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Given these federal incentives, there is a growing body of literature on needs assessment within individual states. Reported methodologies include surveys of service providers and consumers, public opinion surveys, community audits, "spend tax" games, community "speak outs" or public meetings to identify needs, and various forms of screening, such as medical and nutritional.

The American experience, as in so many areas of social innovation, can be instructive. Approaches to needs identification using social sciences technique have, in the past decade or so, been liberally funded with often dubious results. This is not to suggest that we need not be systematic in our approach to such issues but that common sense and consensus cannot be replaced by the "scientific method". There is a tendency for fashion to cloud judgment in such matters.

Strategies

The following approaches are being considered to ensure sound priority setting at the local level:

● assistance in carrying out assessments of needs and priorities,

● consultative and training programs to assist local agencies to use their own resources more effectively in conducting needs assessments and priority setting.

Effective planning requires input from those directly concerned with children's services including the families themselves. Otherwise, planning will take place in a vacuum. This is easier said than done, though there appears to be much rhetoric about the involvement of volunteers, workers and consumers. The methods used are likely to vary with each issue, program and level in the system.

The development of local children's services committees over the next few years is intended to provide a body at the local level with the responsibility and authority for setting priorities and planning for children's services. The Division's consultation paper on local children's services committees emphasizes the important roles that service providers, consumers and municipal governments will play in this process.

Because of the Division's commitment to the involvement of consumers in the planning and delivery of services, it is important to note that the survey identified no reports written from this perspective. Our experience with the involvement of consumers in decision-making about services has shown that procedures and methods used by professionals often exclude them from full participation. This suggests that special emphasis should be placed on developing viable ways to promote the increased involvement of consumers in the identification of needs and priorities in order to give them a genuine voice in the development of programs.

The viewpoints of front-line workers and volunteers are important because they are in touch daily with the needs of people. Their insights into priorities for service are also based on day-to-day experiences. Unfortunately, the planning within agencies is usually done by program managers who are removed from these day-to-day interactions in varying degrees. Therefore, we will also encourage the participation of front-line workers and volunteers in the identification of needs and priorities at the local level.

We have already taken some steps to ensure that these viewpoints are adequately reflected in our planning process. Our consultation paper, entitled Local Children's Services Committees: Planning for the Future, contains guidelines for participation by front-line workers and consumers in local planning and coordinating bodies. Also, we are recruiting front-line workers for participation on the various working groups being established by the Division, such as the Provincial Standards Development Advisory Committee.

In the future, we will take advantage of opportunities to promote the involvement of consumers and front-line workers as they arise. We are open to further suggestions about how to do this.

RATIONALE FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Our analysis of the provincial spectrum of service in Figure 1 suggests that our system of services to children is underdeveloped at the front end (i.e., prevention), and overdeveloped in services often used as a last resort (e.g., training schools). Our strategies for program development in 1978 must take into account what we perceive to be an imbalance in the distribution of resources, based on currently available information.

Prevention

We have identified prevention as our first priority in order to develop services which may prevent serious problems for children and families, along with attendant demands for specialized and expensive services, such as residential treatment programs and corrections institutions. Where existing knowledge or technology can be applied with a reasonable expectation of reducing the rate of disability in children, resources must be found to support these efforts. Because of the limitations on our resources, we must shift some money out of institutional programs. Where we lack sufficient knowledge or technology, resources must be allocated for research and development, keeping in mind both a sense of urgency and the likelihood of showing results for our efforts.

We do not expect to save money in the short run by developing an adequate range of prevention programs. In fact, we may have to find more money to invest in prevention programs while maintaining our capacity to serve children with complex problems. The "savings" in human terms are, however, sufficient to warrant the identification of prevention programs as our highest priority. This position is also reflected by our analysis of needs and priorities in the previous chapter.

Support Through Community-Based Programming

While making a major commitment to prevention, we also acknowledge the necessity to continue to provide a range of services for children who are considered to be out of control in their families and communities. We intend, therefore, as our second priority, to provide a more flexible range of programs in the control range of the spectrum of service, so that few children will be placed in highly secure settings.

The trend has already begun. Over the past few years, the corrections system has shifted away from substitute, institutional services, such as training schools, toward alternative community programs. These community-based programs are intended to provide support to children and families in their own homes who need help to resolve problems with the control of behaviour that are the hallmark of adolescence.

While developing more of these programs in community settings, there will also be a need to provide secure facilities for short periods as back-up support in some extreme situations. In this way, we hope to achieve our goal of reducing the population in institutions.

The federal government is drafting new legisation, The Young Offenders Act, which relies heavily on the development of community-based services to children and young people who come to the attention of the police and the courts. It is expected that the new act soon will replace The Juvenile Delinquents Act and provide alternative means of responding to children who come into conflict with the law.

The Children's Services Division is currently working on a paper for public consultation which will present some of the provincial options for legislation and programs to complement the federal legislation. These options will be guided by our program priorities.

Returning to our analysis, of the spectrum of services for children, we note that about two-thirds of our present resources are spent on services which provide substitute care. Since the principles of the Children's Services Division favour support over substitution, as well as flexibility in the development of programs, we have begun to reallocate existing resources toward these ends. At this time, both the Child Welfare and Children's Mental Health systems provide support services for children and families in crisis, or in need of treatment for emotional or behavioural problems. By increasing the flexibility of these services, we intend to make it easier for people to obtain services provided by non-residential programs to help them resolve problems in the family. We will support the development of a more diversified range of crisis management services, including a balance of residential and non-residential programs.

The Implications

In the next chapter, our rationale for program development will be translated into specific priorities. If our community-based , crisis management strategy is successful, it will reduce the demand for institutional care. Then, we will be able to re-distribute our limited resources more equitably across the spectrum of service with a new emphasis on the prevention of problems and support to children with special needs within the context of their own families. We expect that these two strategies working together will break the traditional bind of continually struggling with immediate problems without having the time, energy or resources to prevent their future occurrence.

Our rationale for program development describes what we intend to do in 1978 and beyond. It is also important to consider how we intend to do this. There are no definitive answers to the question of how we provide effective service in the community for either crisis intervention or prevention purposes. We must implement our strategies, then, in a careful and deliberate way in order to determine systematically, as we go, how effective these strategies will be. In the long run, local children's services committees will be in the best position to monitor the impact of programs and make any adjustments that are needed.

There is also a major task of informing the public about the directions we are taking with children's services and the reasons behind them. For many years we have relied upon specialists and institutions to solve complex social and personal problems. Much current thinking suggests that this reliance has been excessive and that further progress depends upon the mobilization of family and community strengths at least as much as the development of new knowledge and techniques.

In order to create a climate of public understanding of and support for these changes, the Division and the Ministry are committed to a process of public discussion and consultation about the roles of government, agencies, community groups and parents in helping our children with problems arising from their special needs. We hope that this will lead to a renewed commitment by all concerned to meet the special needs of children and their families, wherever possible, in their own homes and communities.

There are three dimensions to our priorities for 1978: <u>regional needs</u>, <u>program content</u> and <u>special groups</u>.   In the following sections, these dimensions will be described in detail.   We will also explain the sorting procedure that will be used to rank proposals for program development.

Regional Needs

The Ministry of Community and Social Services, through the Children's Services Division, is committed to developing a balanced spectrum of services throughout the province to ensure equal access for all children. Because services to children with special needs were planned and developed by four ministries, prior to the creation of the Division, the distribution of services does not currently reflect such a balance.

This situation is most evident in Northern Ontario. The Division, therefore, has identified the North as its highest regional priority for program development in 1978 and plans to increase spending by at least $3 million for the period April 1, 1978, to March 31, 1979. (For our purposes, the North extends south to include the Districts of Parry Sound and Nipissing.)   A special team, headed by Val Gibbons, Area Planning Coordinator, is gathering information about resources available to children in the North, assessing the needs and identifying gaps in service. The team travelled to the major cities in the nine northern districts of the Ministry to involve as many people as possible who are concerned about children's services.   The result of this process was the identification of major gaps in the spectrum of services, and priorities requiring special attention.

These recommendations are not necessarily compatible with province-wide priorities as described in this paper. For example, there is a glaring need for facilities which provide custody for children whose behaviour is considered to be out of control.   Facilities in the control range of the spectrum of service will be developed to provide flexibility of services including detention, short-term crisis management and assessment.

The team is proposing local development of services throughout the North with regional facilities at the Sudbury-Algoma Sanitorium and the Lakehead Psychiatric Hospital providing specialized back-up services.   The team is also proposing the development of prevention and diversion programs, as well as volunteer recruitment, staff training, family support and other special projects.

In recognition of the significant population of both native people and French-speaking people in the North, the development of programs will include a special emphasis on the language and cultural requirements needed to serve them adequately. (See pages 41-43 for a further discussion of services to native people and Franco-Ontarians.)

The Division's statement on program priorities for the North will be announced shortly.

Disparities in the distribution of programs in other parts of the province are not identified as easily. A regional planning process is being devised in preparation for the decentralization of the Division into several regions during 1978. Its purpose is to begin the development of a balanced spectrum of service for every region.

We have analyzed available information from the program branches of the Division as part of our plan for the reorganization of services. More information will be collected and analyzed this year to assist us in identifying inequities between and within regions. This analysis will allow us to be more specific in our identification of regional disparities and priorities for 1979 and beyond.

The internal organization of the Division is being reviewed with a view toward the decentralization of responsibility for programs and the process of planning. In the interim, proposals for program development will be expected to include documentation about the existing local or regional spectrum of service. A proposed program, then, will be examined in its local and/or regional context.

Program Content

We have identified four program areas of high priority. They will be described in the form of the objectives set out in the spectrum of service in Figure 1. For each priority, we will describe general program categories that could meet the objective. The specific programs that would fall within this framework will vary according to local preferences. We will offer examples of programs for each category described. Finally, for each priority, we will present a summary, showing the program objective, the strategy to be applied and program examples.

By presenting our priorities in terms of objectives within the spectrum of service in Figure 1, we hope to provide some consistent directions for program development in 1978, while allowing flexibility for a variety of programs that would meet our objectives.

In summary, our priorities for program content in 1978 are:

1. Prevention

2. Temporary Restraint

3. Crisis Management

4. Treatment.

First Priority: Prevention

Objective: to maximize the strengths of families to help them in coping with potential problems. (A-2 on the spectrum of service.)

Our intention is to start focussing our limited resources toward providing supportive programs which will help families in high risk situations. Because our experience and knowledge about prevention is limited, we are beginning by assembling some of our most knowledgeable people, under the chairmanship of Dr. Naomi Rae-Grant, Chief of Child Psychiatry at War Memorial Children's Hospital of Western Ontario and a consultant to the Children's Services Division. This Prevention Project will submit a plan to the Children's Services Division by the summer of 1978 which will suggest strategies for the development of prevention programs. Their report will identify groups especially vulnerable and at risk, and recommend possible interventions. Methods of monitoring and evaluation will also be proposed.

The Children's Services Division has special funds allocated for some kinds of prevention programs during the fiscal year of April 1, 1978, to March 31, 1979. These programs are a continuation of work being done by the various branches in their respective ministries prior to the creation of the Children's Services Division.

The Child Abuse Program in the Child Welfare Branch has been funding preventive, treatment and educational projects, with a budget of $376,000 in 1977-78. These projects include: demonstration projects in treatment and prevention; interprofessional training; public and professional education; and the publication of literature. This budget will be more than doubled for 1978-79 (an additional $460,000 will be available). Projects receiving particular priority for the coming year will be those related to prevention, training for professionals, rural community efforts to deal with child abuse, and urban strategies for community coordination.

Existing projects include various approaches in using parent aides or foster families, group treatment of parents of failure-to-thrive infants, and the testing of a self-help approach. In-service training projects for a variety of disciplines are also being funded in 15 Ontario communities.

While these funds will be significant in leading us in new directions and providing guidance to established programs, they represent only a small fraction of the funds being invested in child abuse services. The great proportion of the funds for child abuse are channeled to children's aid societies, which carry the primary responsibility in the community for the protection of children. In addition, of course, an extensive range of health, legal, educational and judicial resources are brought to bear on the problem. The overall cost of all these services would be many millions of dollars.

Notwithstanding this large investment in services, the need to explore preventive strategies, educational and training initiatives, and means of effective coordination remains a high priority.

A Task Force on Child Abuse, headed by Dr. Ralph Garber, Dean of the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Toronto, has been appointed to review the practices and procedures of the children's aid societies in the management of child abuse cases. The report, due in May of 1978, will assist us further in determining how to use our dollars more effectively to prevent and treat child abuse.

The short-term legislative amendments being proposed by the Ministry recommend that "care by agreement" and "special needs agreements" should be available to 16 and 17-year-olds upon the approval of the Director of Child Welfare. Its purpose is to provide services to some young people in exceptional situations who come to the attention of the children's aid societies after their 16th birthday. The proposed amendment will remove the impediment to providing services to people in this age group and allow flexibility to provide services which may prevent further problems for them in the future. Limited new funding will be allocated specifically for this purpose. At the moment, these services are funded sometimes under unusual arrangements such as the purchase of service by children's mental health centres.

The Division has established a Training Schools Closure Committee which is considering the development of prevention programs for children who have not been adjudged delinquent and programs to teach life skills, family education and preparation for community living. The purpose of new programs like these will be to provide skills and support for children and their families to prevent the occurrence of behaviour which may bring a child into conflict with the law and the corrections system. (For a discussion of the work of the Committee, see p. 31.)

The Corrections Branch of the Children's Services Division is currently negotiating additional cost sharing with the federal Department of the Solicitor-General, Consultation Centre. The money will be used to finance programs aimed at preventing the incidence of problem behaviour which often brings children into contact with the law, our juvenile courts and the corrections system. More specific information about the types of programs to receive support will be made available upon the successful conclusion of these negotiations.

The Day Nurseries Branch will receive an additional $200,000 during the fiscal year beginning April 1, 1978, to purchase in-home programming for handicapped children. As part of the process of normalization, these children are attending regular programs, wherever possible. The new money will be used to supplement the nursery school program for some handicapped children by bringing it into their own homes. The services of a professional will be provided to train the parents in the same techniques to teach basic living skills that are used in the nursery school program. The reinforcement of these skills in the home will enhance the developmental potential for handicapped children. The long-term benefits for these children and their families could be substantial.

Summary

Goal	Nourishment
Objective	Maximizing strengths to cope with potential problems.
Strategy	Providing support to children and families in high risk situations.
Program Examples	A Prevention Project to propose strategies for developing prevention programs.
	Child Abuse projects related to prevention, training for professionals, rural community efforts to deal with child abuse, and urban strategies for community coordination.
	Extension of temporary and special needs agreements under The Child Welfare Act to 16 and 17-year-olds in special circumstances.
	Reallocation of money from the closure of training schools to develop prevention programs.
	Youth crime prevention programs in cooperation with the Consultation Centre of the Department of the Solicitor-General for Canada.
	Purchase of services to supplement the nursery school program teaching basic life skills to handicapped children in the home by training the parents to use the same methods.

Second Priority: Temporary Restraint

Objective: to impose temporary restraint in a sensitive way which will support the child in developing a capacity for self-control (A-5 on the spectrum of service.)

This objective falls within the control range of the spectrum of service, dealing specifically with children who are considered to be "out of control" in their own families and communities.   These children come to the attention of the police, the courts and the juvenile corrections system.

The policy and principles of the Children's Services Division favour support to children in their own families and communities over substitute arrangements.   Our second priority will promote the development of programs for these children to assist them to function in their home environments. Institutional programs, such as training schools which have historically served these children, will be pared down to a more limited scale.   The use of these facilities will be tightly controlled by selective criteria for a specific type of child who needs a closed and structured environment.   In addition, a variety of alternative programs will be developed to offer a flexible range of services that can provide varying degrees of control, tailored to the needs and behaviour of individual children who do not control their own behaviour adequately by our social standards, but who are not dangerous to themselves or others.

This priority is supported by recent research which questions the value of institutionalization as a means of rehabilitation.   This research has shown that community care can be just as effective, if not more effective, for the majority of these children. At the same time, it is recognized that there are children who require secure care because they are a danger to themselves and to others. A review of children recently admitted to our training school system indicated that only a small proportion belonged in this category.

As a result of these findings, the Division has developed a plan to phase out seven out of ten training schools over the next three years, beginning immediately with the closure of the Hillcrest and Sprucedale schools.   The three remaining institutions will be converted to secure care units which will accommodate a total of 120 children.

The Training Schools Closure Committee is developing plans for programs to meet the needs of children in their own communities rather than by sending them to institutions. Using our program priorities as a guide, the plans will include prevention programs, as previously described, as well as crisis management services provided by non-residential programs in the child's community. These programs will offer increased support to children and their families to work out problems that might otherwise come to the attention of the police, the courts and the corrections system. Some of the money will be shifted into family support services, spreading our resources more equitably across the whole spectrum of services. The final stage of training school closures will take place after these community services are developed.

As indicated under our first priority, we are negotiating a federal-provincial cost-sharing agreement to support the further development of screening and diversion programs which are intended to limit the numbers of children who are brought before the Juvenile Court. These negotiations are intended to assist in the development of community-based programs in preparation for the enactment of the new Young Offenders Act.

Meanwhile, the repeal of Section 8 of The Training Schools Act in 1977 precludes sending children to training schools solely for unmanageable behaviour. A pilot project has been undertaken by Central Toronto Youth Services to provide individualized care for our "hard-to-place" training school wards, using a contract-for-service approach. The contracts will make use of existing resources where possible. Additional funding will result from reallocation within the budgets of the two children's aid societies in Metropolitan Toronto, Central Toronto Youth Services and new money (approximately $200,000) from the Division. Such support will allow expansion of the program to include probationers and children referred by the children's aid societies in cases where their needs are not being met by existing resources. If the contracting approach is successful, it will be expanded to other parts of the province.

The issues of assessment and decision-making in general are most critical for the operation of the service system as a whole. Unless we can develop a coherent approach and resolve confusion and unnecessary conflict over terminology, professional competence and referral for service, all other reform will be of little avail.

Assessment services available to the Family Courts are important in order to ensure the best decisions for children. Though the Division currently funds three Family Court clinics, which specialize in this type of service, we plan to take a different approach to the further development of assessment services.

Our intention is to assist in the coordination of assessment resources available through the existing networks of community services. This would include assisting judges, through services funded or operated by the Division, in ensuring the availability of assessment and clinical support. In this way, the judges will be able to draw more effectively on existing resources to inform their decisions about the disposition of cases before the court. In those areas where it can be demonstrated that there is an insufficient capability to conduct assessments, the Division is prepared to review the situation and consider appropriate adjustments.

The Division has established a Task Force on Family Court Clinics, headed by Barry Lowes, Chairman of the Training Schools Advisory Board, which will soon make recommendations about how we develop assessment services for the Family Court.

One of the long-term goals of the Division is to integrate and rationalize assessment resources accessible to children with special needs. This goal emerges from the recognition that assessment resources within the current delivery system are fragmented and inefficiently utilized. The Standards and Information Systems Group will produce four major papers between April 1, 1978, and January 1, 1979, on advocacy and children's rights, functional model concepts, functional model detailed, and standards and guidelines for assessment.

In the meantime, current operational and planning demands on the Juvenile Corrections Branch and the Observation and Detention Homes Branch require more immediate resolution of their assessment problems. Both branches are committed to some form of "'community-based'" assessment for their respective clients. However, there is no commonly accepted goal, nor is there agreement on a compatible range of means for organizing resources on a community basis. Consequently, there is no uniform strategy for proceeding towards the goal in an efficient and effective manner. We will be developing a plan to integrate pre-dispositional and post-dispositional assessments.

The Observation and Detention Home Branch is currently re-organizing the provision of short-term, pre-dispositional holding facilities. While children detained in such facilities by order of the Family Court Judge will often require a variety of specialized assessment resources, it is not the intent that the total of such resources will be purchased or otherwise be made available by local service organizations or individuals. The homes' personnel will function in an advocacy role which, in part, is to ensure that children receive adequate assessments, as ordered by the Court, and to provide the Court with observations on the behaviour of the child who is in the care of the home.

A project has been launched to develop a four-stage model of custody: locked homes, lockable homes, open homes and in-home supervision. It will provide a more flexible range of services to meet the needs of children considered to be out of control. A total of $1,700,000 has been allocated for the fiscal year beginning April 1, 1978, to develop a provincial distribution plan.

Summary

Goal	Control
Objective	Imposing temporary restraint to support capacity for self-control.
Strategy	Developing strengths in families and communities to provide increased support for helping children who have come into conflict with society and the law.
Program Example	A plan for the closure of training schools and the reallocation of money to community services for children in conflict with the law.
	Screening and diversion programs to limit the number of children who are brought before the Juvenile Court.
	Contracting for individualized programs for "hard to place" children in Metropolitan Toronto.
	Promoting the development of assessment resources to serve Family Courts, using the existing network of community services, wherever possible.
	The preparation of four major papers on advocacy and children's rights, functional model concepts, functional model detailed, and standards and guidelines for assessment.
	A provincial distribution plan for the development of a four-stage model of custody provided by Observation and Detention Homes.

Third Priority: Crisis Management

Objective: Providing support to children and their families to
                            cope with crisis situations arising from their
                            special needs. (A-3 on the spectrum of service.)

Programs that provide intervention and support to help families manage
their own crises within the home would fall under this objective. Crisis
management services for children and their families may assist them to
resolve their crises without resorting to the removal of the child from the
family.

An improved capacity to provide these services in the context of the Child
Welfare, Children's Mental Health and Juvenile Justice systems may prevent
the later development of more serious problems. We will then begin to
reduce gradually the number of children who are placed in a variety of
residential programs providing substitute care (e.g., group homes, treatment
centres and training schools).

Within the Child Welfare system, plans are being developed which will
provide increased budgeting flexibility. Children's aid societies will be
encouraged to develop proposals for the reallocation of resources from
residential to non-residential services, within existing budget allocations.
The focus will be on testing alternative support programs for children who
might otherwise be provided with substitute care.

We will also develop plans for the equitable distribution of residential
facilities across the province. Already, we have identified a number of
population and demographic variables to assist us in the distribution.

We are planning to make better use of existing beds in a number of ways.
For example, an underutilized children's institution in Sudbury is being
converted partially into an Observation and Detention Home. We are also
creating a Placement Assistance System to provide current information
about the location of available beds and the types of programs associated
with them.   This system will assist front-line workers to make more
appropriate use of residential programs.

There are also some financial problems to be addressed for some types of
residential services. Concerns have been raised by children's institutions
about their outstanding deficits for 1977.

Some of the corporations approved under The Children's Institutions Act are able to raise 20% of their operating costs for private placements from fees charged to parents or residents. Others raise their share of operating costs by using a variety of fund raising methods. As per diem rates have gone up in the last two or three years, corporations have found themselves needing to raise increasing amounts of money to meet their financial obligations.

If the situation of the children's institutions is difficult, that of the charitable institutions is much more acute. The ceiling of $16.00 on per diem rates under The Charitable Institutions Act means that for every home whose operating costs exceed the ceiling, the corporation must pay 100% of the additional cost.

The Division is giving consideration to ways of alleviating these financial problems in the short run, while new funding mechanisms are being devised.

A growing body of literature suggests that the "self-help" approach can be highly effective in some situations. It encourages children and their families to draw on their own strengths to solve their problems. Group work and peer counselling are two examples of programs which will merit further attention and evaluation. Such programs have been tried in other jurisdictions and show early, promising results.

The Division recognizes the important contribution that volunteers make in providing services to children and families. They offer skills, energy and other resources that enrich programs in any community. Our emphasis on community-based programming underlines the significance of voluntarism in children's services. Volunteers provide an effective link with the local community.

The Division is conducting an analysis of the nature and extent of the volunteer component of programs in all branches. On the basis of this analysis, we will develop methods of supporting the use of volunteers. The emphasis likely will be on encouraging means by which resources can be deployed to assist agencies that want to increase the use of volunteers in their programs.

Summary

Goal	Nourishment	Rehabilitation

Objective

Providing support to cope with crisis situations in the home.

Strategy

Developing an increased capacity to support children and families to resolve their crises within the family environment.

Program Example

More flexibility in child welfare programs to reallocate money in existing budgets from residential to non-residential care.

A Placement Assistance System to make more appropriate use of available beds.

Alleviating the financial problems of children's institutions, while devising new funding mechanisms.

Promotion of self-help programs such as peer counselling and group work with parents and children.

Promoting the use of volunteers in programs supported by the Children's Services Division.

Fourth Priority: Treatment

Objective: Providing treatment to promote personal or
                              behavioural change and increased capacity of
                              children and families to cope with problems. (A-4
                              on the spectrum of service.)

This objective is in the rehabilitation range of the spectrum. Treatment programs in this range attempt to assist the child and family in dealing with emotional and behavioural disturbances.

The Children's Services Division has a major investment in treatment programs, through its Children's Mental Health Services Branch--about $60 million in 1978. Children's mental health centres have already developed a range of treatment which includes home care, out-patient, day treatment and residential treatment. We will continue to support these treatment programs in 1978, as well as encourage the further development of a range of non-residential forms of treatment.

In recognition of the existing gap in our spectrum of treatment services for children requiring a high degree of behaviour control, a secure treatment unit will be set up to handle children who are particularly dangerous to themselves or other people. Because it is highly specialized, it is intended, at least for the time being, to provide service to only a few children from across the province. Learning from other jurisdictions, we feel it is necessary to ensure that the very small number of disturbed children who are dangerously assaultive or impulsive can be properly provided with care and treatment. The secure treatment unit will test this approach on a small scale before any additions to this type of programming are considered for these children.

Our major emphasis in the development of treatment programs this year will be related to the francophone population as well as Northern Ontario and other areas where an absence of treatment resources can be documented.

Summary

Goal	Rehabilitation
Objective	Providing treatment to promote personal or behavioural change and increased capacity to cope with problems.
Strategy	The development of non-residential treatment programs that offer a range of services to children and families in their own communities.
Program Example	A secure treatment unit for a small number of children who pose a danger to themselves or others.
	Continuing the development of treatment programs through children's mental health centres, with particular emphasis on Northern Ontario and the francophone population.

Special Groups

Two major cultural groups command the special attention of the Children's Services Division in the identification of its program priorities--Franco-Ontarians and native people. They have been identified as "target populations" of high priority because of their special needs for children's services as well as their special status in Ontario.

Franco-Ontarians

The problems encountered in providing services to a minority group are similar to those encountered in providing services to any relatively small and scattered population. While the francophone minority may have substantially the same needs for services as the majority of Ontarians, it is impractical and expensive to provide parallel French and English services in each community in the province having some francophone residents. Therefore, new strategies are being devised to identify and provide needed services in communities having a significant concentration of Franco-Ontarians. Our initial demographic analysis indicates that the major concentrations of our French-speaking population are in the counties of Prescott, Russell, Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry and Renfrew in Eastern Ontario; and the districts of Cochrane, Temiskaming, Nipissing, Algoma and the Region of Sudbury in Northern Ontario.

The Children's Services Division is committed to the goal of equal access for all children with special needs to a spectrum of services that will be embodied ultimately in provincial standards. Accessibility to services is often limited by geographic, linguistic and cultural factors. A service provided in the French language and within the French cultural context is a specialized service of sorts and it is unlikely that such services can be provided reasonably in each community in the province. Where the francophone population is thinly spread, children and families may have to travel further to receive services. The same situation is true in Northern Ontario, for all cultural groups.

While it is economical and rational to add francophone services to agencies already in existence, rather than starting new programs, services provided to francophones should be planned and delivered in a way which recognizes important cultural differences.

In order to hasten the development of children's services to Franco-Ontarians, the budget estimates for the fiscal year April 1, 1978, to March 31, 1979, include $700,000 for services to this population. Some of this money will be used to develop a francophone treatment centre in Prescott-Russell. Information about needs and available resources is currently being collected to further inform our efforts. A special team will then prepare a detailed strategy for the development of services to Franco-Ontarians and a plan for the allocation of the money in this year's budget.

Native People

Any statement on native peoples must begin by drawing the distinction between status and non-status Indians. Status Indians are registered by the federal government as belonging to bands, and have a unique relationship with the federal government under The Indian Act. The non-status Indians are those who have chosen not to live on reserves or whose ancestors did the same. Included in the non-status group are the Metis people. Though they have no special status with the federal or provincial governments, they do have special needs.

Although there are pockets of native peoples spread around the province, by far the most significant numbers are located in the northern region. A special team was established to determine priorities for Northern Ontario and the figures utilized here are a reflection of the status and non-status Indian population for the North only. Therefore these figures should not be construed as representative of the total provincial native population.

The native population in Northern Ontario numbers approximately 65,000 or about 7.2% of the population. Despite the relatively small numbers, a disproportionately high number of native children are in the care of the children's aid societies and the Corrections system. The following figures represent the percentage of native children in the care of several children's aid societies in 1976:

- Kenora - 88%

- Rainy River - 66%

- Thunder Bay - 46%

- Kapuskasing - 39%

Within the training school population from Northern Ontario in 1977, 45% are native children. The percentage is even higher for the Districts of Thunder Bay, Kenora and Rainy River in Northwestern Ontario--63%.

These figures suggest a high level of social and familial malaise among native people in the North. Care for native children has frequently meant removal from both family and community. This has contributed to cultural disorientation and loss of identity. Because the Division is committed to family and community support, any efforts to come to grips with these problems must be based upon consultation with community representatives. Since the Federal Government has constitutional responsibilities in this field, close collaboration among all levels of government is essential.

There are also large pockets of native people in a number of cities throughout the province. More people are moving from the reserves to the cities all the time. Native communities tend to band together in urban areas and often spawn specialized services for native people, such as the Indian Friendship Centres. The problem of cultural alienation is more pronounced in the cities, where efforts at supporting native culture attempt to combat the problem and form the basis of a native community. Our policy for the non-status urban native population will be to support the training of native people and the development of their own programs, where feasible. Also, we will encourage existing agencies to become more responsive to their needs and engage in cooperative efforts with native organizations.

Features of A Program: Guidelines for Design

The Basic Principles of Service Delivery outlined on pages 13 to 15 suggest a number of features to be incorporated into the design of any program supported by the Children's Services Division. These features will ensure that programs are provided in a way that is consistent with the Division's overall goals..

The following features will be used as guidelines in evaluating program proposals to the Division for funding. Every program, regardless of its place in the spectrum of service, will be encouraged to incorporate these features in the design of their operations:

From the Child's and the Family's Perspective

- support in the family context, drawing on family and community resources

- minimal intrusion, disruption and restriction of the child and family to the greatest degree consistent with the potential effectiveness of the service

- an easily available process for children and parents to register dissatisfaction with a service and seek resolution

- maximum accessibility to service, taking into account such factors as distance, time of day, language and cultural diversity.

From the Service Provider's Perspective

- flexibility of methods to respond to the particular needs of each child

- location within the mainstream of normal community activities and facilities to minimize stigmatizing effect of receiving service (e.g., schools, community centres, etc.)

- methods of ensuring continuity of care when more than one service provider is involved

- participation of consumer groups, community organizations, related service agencies and other interest groups in planning and providing services.

From the Ministry's Perspective

- budgeting for a sufficient level of resources to provide a high quality of service (i.e., people, money and facilities)

- methods of accountability for the performance of the service and the expenditure of money

- methods of evaluation to determine the usefulness of the program.

As we apply these guidelines consistently for all programs supported by the Children's Services Division, we will ensure that our services are operating by the Basic Principles of Service Delivery.

Putting Program Priorities to Work

Having presented our priorities for program development in 1978 we must now address ways in which we will translate them into action. We have already made some decisions about program development this year. We also have a number of proposals before us that are being considered in light of our priorities as described in this paper.

This section describes how the various dimensions of priorities (i.e. region, program and people) will be applied to proposals for program development this year. This process will be used to evaluate proposals from within the Children's Services Division as well as proposals received from community groups throughout the province. Also, it will serve as a guide for the reallocation of money within existing budgets as well as the allocation of limited amounts of new money available for 1978.

The following is a step-by-step description of the implementation process. The numbers for each step correspond to the numbers in Figure 2, at the end of this chapter.

1. Proposals for program development will be received by the Children's Services Division through the Consultation Task Force (700 Bay Street, 12th Floor, Toronto, Ontario. M7A 1E9), which will be responsible for coordinating the movement of proposals through the process. Because of the changing internal organization of the Children's Services Division from a branch orientation to a regional orientation, it will be necessary to have a consistent point of reference at this time to ensure that program proposals are not lost in the reorganization. Proposals for program development in the North will be forwarded by the Consultation Task Force to the special team that has been assembled to identify program priorities in Northern Ontario. All other proposals will be sent directly to the regions.

2. The regions will sort the proposals according to objectives, using the program priorities described in the previous section. Proposals which contradict the Basic Principles of Service Delivery or have insufficient information according to the format in Appendix 1 will be returned to the sponsoring groups with the appropriate explanation or a request for further information.

3. Proposals within each of the program priorities outlined previously will be sorted according to their target population. Proposals focussing on the needs of native people and francophones will be given highest priority.

    By this stage, proposals will have been sorted according to priorities for region, program and people.

4. Proposals which address all of our priorities will then be examined using the guidelines presented in the preceding section. This will identify proposals which include features considered to be important in the terms of the Basic Principles of Service Delivery adopted by the Division.

5. Copies of the proposals will be reviewed by the Directors of the Division's program branches who will consider the quality of programs in light of their professional expertise. For some programs, specific people in the Division who have special expertise will be consulted (e.g., diversion, prevention, child abuse).

6. At this stage, the financial implications of proposals will be examined by the Financial Analysts within the Division. Their review will help us to identify any special considerations for present and future budgeting.

7. The recommendations of the regional program organization and Financial Analysts will be forwarded to the Planning Committee of the Division to decide which projects will receive funding. The Planning Committee consists of senior management.

8. These decisions are subject to the approval of the Minister of Community and Social Services.

9. The proposed programs that will be funded by the Division will be returned to the regions for implementation. (Because of the internal reorganization of the Division the responsibility for program management will shift to a regional base in 1978.)

    Internal procedures are being developed for the implementation stage in order to ensure that the best possible design is developed. The Division's commitment to support programs at this stage will be demonstrated by professional consultation with groups to assist them in translating their proposals into action and by funding to cover any start-up costs that might be incurred.

The state of the arts of treatment, prevention and child development limit our ability, regardless of funding, to deal with many pressing problems. The Ministry will develop research priorities over the next year, and seek to improve funding for projects which promise results in significant areas.
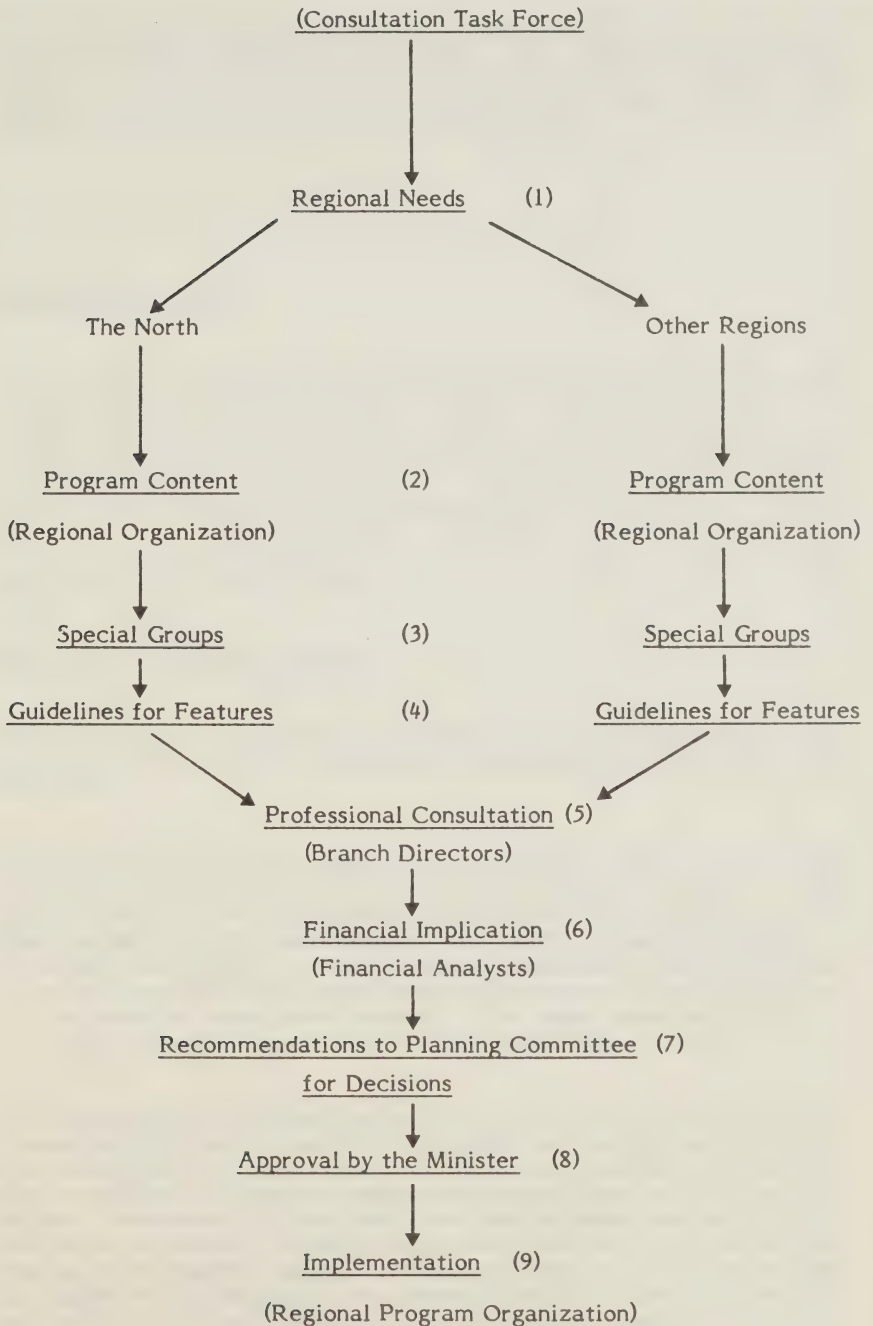
Evaluation

Recent years have seen mounting concern that program planning and funding has tended to be carried out without adequate feedback regarding consequences of decisions. Lacking reliable information, decisions to initiate and maintain services, therefore, have come to be highly suspect.

An apparent shortfall in achieving expected results by largely publicly-funded programs has led to a mounting demand for more effective monitoring and evaluation. Beyond the simple acknowledgement of the need for more explicit objectives and better information feedback, the precise means appropriate to a specific program become matters of discussion if not controversy.

Given finite limits on resources and technology for evaluation, we face the necessity to exercise judgment in terms of what information is desirable in order to ensure rational program planning, how much of this information we can realistically expect to obtain and how much we can afford. It is well to remember that we are considering a range of evaluation options from the simplest basic administrative information and review requirements, to the most sophisticated empirical research. Programs themselves require feedback in order to plan and adjust services to meet changing needs.

Linking these issues, all programs will be expected to set reasonable procedures for ongoing self-monitoring and accountability. Some types of program will require more careful examination because of the importance of the issues which they raise. These will be dealt with on a carefully selected project basis.

Figure 2

IMPLEMENTING PROPOSALS RECEIVED BY CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIVISION

(Consultation Task Force)

Regional Needs   (1)

The North   Other Regions

Program Content   (2)   Program Content

(Regional Organization)   (Regional Organization)

Special Groups   (3)   Special Groups

Guidelines for Features   (4)   Guidelines for Features

Professional Consultation (5)

(Branch Directors)

Financial Implication   (6)

(Financial Analysts)

Recommendations to Planning Committee (7)

for Decisions

Approval by the Minister   (8)

Implementation   (9)

(Regional Program Organization)

The limitations involved in developing program priorities for 1978 were outlined in the introduction to this paper. They also highlight improved methods of priority setting for the future. In this section, we describe our approach to priorities for 1979, taking into account some of the related developments within the Children's Services Division.

Developments in 1978

The Division is committed to developing methods of identifying the special needs of children. The creation of information systems will provide more accurate information about existing programs. The decentralization of authority for programs will begin with the funding of developmental models for local children's services committees. At the same time, the Division will begin to decentralize its program management on a regional basis to replace the current centralized structures. Finally, a public discussion and education program will create a more receptive climate for the changes being described in this document.

Identifying the Needs of Children

Since the Division is committed to reorganizing services according to the identified needs of children, our priority setting process must start with these needs.

There is a major dilemma in this approach to priority setting. By promoting the identification of needs as the first step in the process, we may be raising expectations about the availability of services which we cannot meet in a time of severe economic and budgetary constraints. A thorough assessment of the needs of children in a given community is likely to lead to increased demands for service. With severe limits on our resources for programs, we will be unable to meet these demands. The result could be a sense of frustration and failure for everyone involved with children's services.

Our commitment to reorganizing services around the needs of children is intended to bring more rationality to a system that has evolved in response to a multiplicity of special interests. It is also intended to ensure that services are flexible enough to respond sensitively to the individual needs of children. Heretofore, children and their families have been faced with a fixed array of services. In this situation, they have had to choose between adapting to the existing system or not receiving service at all. Children who have fallen through the gaps in the system often have turned up later with more difficult problems stemming from earlier, unmet needs. The focus on needs as a starting point for planning and delivering services, therefore, requires new approaches from policy-makers, program managers and front-line workers.

It is, therefore, of strategic importance that the Division assist local communities to identify and priorize the needs of children and evaluate the effectiveness of current services in this context. A substantial body of knowledge about the development of children as well as informed opinion, both have a part to play in this process. At the same time, this will have to be done using existing resources.

Although we have no answer to this dilemma now, there are some directions to explore in the near future. The identification of needs must be linked closely with priority setting as we attempt to allocate scarce resources where they will be most effective. Also, we can explore relatively inexpensive methods of meeting needs.

Though many services for children have been brought together in the Children's Services Division, still others remain the responsibility of other ministries and other levels of government. The American experience demonstrates that structures organized around a special population, such as children, must maintain an advocacy function to influence a wide range of programs that have an effect on that population.

It is important to recognize that the related systems of health, education, recreation, income maintenance and housing, all share responsibilities to provide programs which promote the health and well-being of children and their families, and to devise programs to prevent the development of special needs requiring specialized and expensive services. The Children's Services Division will play an important advocacy role to marshall the resources of these related systems in a coordinated fashion.

The Speech from the Throne on February 21, 1978 made the commitment that:

> "The Government will undertake a comprehensive review of its policies and programs as they affect the family, with the aim of making appropriate changes to enhance the role and authority of the family unit."

To that end, an Interministerial Council on Families will be established, reporting to the Provincial Secretary for Social Development. The Council will provide an opportunity for the Children's Services Division and the Ministry of Community and Social Services to create linkages with other ministries to coordinate government policies and programs in support of the family.

Information Systems

As we improve our ability to identify needs, we must match them against available services. The points of mismatch between needs and available services will guide the identification of program priorities. The Children's Services Division is making a major commitment to develop methods to collect, analyze and disseminate useful information about children's services to provide a factual base upon which to plan, develop and evaluate programs.

The first step of this effort is directed toward residential services. An inventory of residential services is currently being set up. The Placement Assistance System will assist workers to make the most appropriate use of existing beds. Also, a tracking system is being designed to ensure that children are not lost in the system as they move from one placement to another.

Local Children's Services Committees

Our focus on program development will be at the local level, through the establishment of children's services committees. In January, 1978, the Division released a consultation paper describing the functions these committees will perform in planning for children's services. Money has been committed for the fiscal year 1978-79, to assist several developmental models for local committees. One of their first tasks may be the identification and documentation of local needs, available services and program priorities.

The Division is also committed to providing support to voluntary efforts at coordinating local service planning and delivery, after we determine what resources will be needed by the models to be selected. Technical assistance, research, consultation and some limited incentive money will support efforts in areas not chosen as sites for developmental models. Also, the organization of regular workshops will assist local representatives to share their experiences with each other.

Reorganization by Region

This year, the Division will begin to decentralize its program organization to regional offices. Reorganization along geographic lines will provide communities with more direct access to management and professional resources. Regional management will play an important support role in the gradual shift of decision-making responsibilities to the local children's services committees. This shift will take place in the context of the standards of service to be established by the Division, through its Provincial Standards Advisory Committee. A consultation paper on standards will be ready by the summer of 1978.

Public Discussion and Education

We recognize that there are problems involved in working with some children in their own communities. For example, zoning by-laws restrict the location of residential programs and may prevent a rational approach to community programming in some cases. In other cases, there is public reaction against having difficult children in a particular neighbourhood.

If we want local communities to work with the Division, we must recognize the need to educate the public about the importance of meeting the needs of children in their own homes and communities. A public education strategy will be developed to this end.

A number of methods can be utilized at the local level. Programs supported by the Division can be encouraged to use local resources, such as staff and volunteers. We can encourage programs to make contact with local organizations (e.g., ratepayer's groups) to interpret what they are doing and to solicit support for their efforts.

At the provincial level, the Ministry will attempt to ensure that standards for residential programs address local concerns about quality. The consultation process will be developed further to promote broad discussion of important issues related to children's services. The local children's services committees established as developmental models this year will be expected to have broad local representation and involvement in the process of planning for children's services. And finally, we must ensure that appropriate programming is available to children who are returning to their families and communities from institutional care.

The United Nations has declared 1979 "The International Year of the Child". As a result, public attention will be focussed on the needs of children and their families. Within this context, the Ministry will participate in public discussions and education programs aimed at creating a renewed commitment by all concerned to meet the needs of children and their families. In this way, we hope that we can generate further public awareness and support for the directions being taken by the Children's Services Division and the system of children's services throughout the province.

The Impact of Priorities for 1978

The priorities described in this paper are intended to be the first steps in a long range plan to provide a complete spectrum of services for all children with special needs, consistent with our Basic Principles of Service Delivery. Priorities for 1979, therefore, will build on our experiences with program development in 1978. We will promote promising program strategies while making appropriate adjustments as problems arise or as new developments take effect.

Using this approach, we will create greater flexibility in the province-wide system of services, making it more readily adaptable to necessary changes over the long term.

Priorities for 1979

This first paper on program priorities for children's services has been based on information currently available. In addition, some decisions about program development had to be made before the paper was prepared.

We intend to produce another paper on Program Priorities for 1979 and beyond, which will be based on an analysis of the new information currently being obtained. This paper should be ready by the summer of 1978 to guide us in our budgetting for next year.

In order to take into account the preliminary responses of community organizations and individuals to this first statement about program priorities, a Feedback Page is included at the end of this paper.

APPENDIX 1

FORMAT FOR PROPOSALS

Statement of Need Being Addressed

- documentation of incidence (where possible)

- presenting problems

Purpose of Proposed Program

- relationship to program priorities of Children's Services Division of the Ministry of Community and Social Services

Community Context

- place in local spectrum of services to children

- relationships with related services and resources

Design of Program

- review of the literature (where appropriate)

- functions and activities

- estimate of number of children and families being served, and extent of contact

- staffing and volunteers

- structure and relationships for decision-making and accountability

- legal status of sponsoring organization (e.g., registered charitable organization)

- mechanisms for information and feedback built into the regular procedures of service delivery

Estimate of Resources Required

(from the community and the Ministry)

- money - budget - sources

- technical assistance - sources

- consultation - sources

- facilities and equipment - sources

APPENDIX 1 (Cont'd)

Steps to Implementation

- negotiation of resources
- feasibility study where applicable
- developmental work to be done

FEEDBACK PAGE

This paper represents our first effort to identify and describe priorities for programs funded by the Children's Services Division. We are, therefore, interested in receiving feedback from you about the key elements of the paper. Your comments will be taken into account in the preparation of the second paper about Program Priorities for 1979, which will be ready in the summer of 1978. No deadline has been set for feedback because the priority-setting process will be continuing as part of our overall planning effort.

A spectrum of service was developed to provide a framework within which all children's services could be mapped and their relationships studied (see page 6).

> Do the goals and objectives described in Figure 1 encompass a full range of services?
>
> Are they described in language that is understandable?
>
> Can you think of any programs that would not fit within the spectrum?
>
> Is it a useful tool to illustrate the relationships of various programs across the spectrum?
>
> Can it be adapted to a local perspective to assist in identifying possible duplication and gaps in services?

The paper describes a rationale for program development to provide an overall sense of direction for our program priorities (see pages 21-23).

> We have identified prevention as our first priority in order to correct what we perceive to be an imbalance in the spectrum of services in favour of crisis services and substitute care. Do you agree with this perception? If not, why not?
>
> Do you think that increased support for community-based programming will reduce the demand for residential and institutional care?

What kinds of programs are needed in response to the proposed Young Offenders Act with its emphasis on community-based services to children who come to the attention of the police and the courts?

How can we improve our crisis management services to help children and their families to resolve problems without removing the child from the home?

Our program priorities have been described in the form of objectives to allow flexibility in the local development of programs while providing an overall sense of direction (see pages 27-40).

Do the objectives identified for each priority provide direction as well as flexibility for program development?

Do the proposed strategies for each objective provide useful insights for programming?

What alternative strategies come to mind for the objectives?

We have outlined a set of features of a program, based on our Basic Principles of Service Delivery, to provide guidelines for the design of programs (see pages 43-44).

Are they described in a way that can be easily incorporated into the design of a program?

In addition to the specific questions raised above, do you have any other comments to make about this paper? Please send your feedback to:

Malcolm Shookner, Policy Advisor
Children's Services Division
Ministry of Community and Social Services
700 Bay Street, 11th Floor
TORONTO, Ontario
M7A 1E9